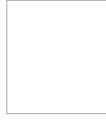


Pro-Am: Charity -- Make This Slam

Board 2
West Deals
N-S Vul

♠ A J
♥ K J 9 7 2
♦ J 6 3
♣ Q 9 2



♠ Q 9 8 5
♥ Q 5
♦ A K Q 9
♣ A 10 6

Deal rotated for convenience.

6 ♦ by South

Lead: ♠ K

After a forgettable auction, South declares six diamonds. After some thought, Mike, the other "pro" at the table, leads the ♠K. After winning on dummy, a small heart is called. East wins this with the ♥A, and leads a second round of spades, West following. Plan the play.

Board 2

West Deals

N-S Vul

<p>♠ K 4 ♥ 10 8 6 4 3 ♦ 10 8 2 ♣ J 7 4</p>	<p>♠ A J ♥ K J 9 7 2 ♦ J 6 3 ♣ Q 9 2</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: 0 auto;"></div> <p>♠ Q 9 8 5 ♥ Q 5 ♦ A K Q 9 ♣ A 10 6</p>	<p>♠ 10 7 6 3 2 ♥ A ♦ 7 5 4 ♣ K 8 5 3</p>
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NS 6N; NS 6♥; NS 6♦; NS 4♠; NS 4♣

It looked as if I needed a red suit to split; I chose hearts. My plan was to take four diamonds, three spades, a club, and four hearts. Accordingly, I drew trumps, discarding a club from dummy. Failure was announced by East's discard, when I overtook the ♥Q. The other obvious line also fails: cash the ♥Q and draw trumps ending on dummy. This depends on diamonds 3-3 and hearts 4-2. Mike made a great lead!

Given the near certainty that West has only two spades, a heart suit headed by the 10 is likely to be in the West hand. The key play is at trick two: unblock the ♥Q! Since my plan was to overtake, the ♥Q has only negative value. My fault: I should have decided on my plan before playing to that trick, rather than after.

Upon winning the ♠A, best is to return to hand in trumps, ruff a spade (West discards the ♣4), cash the ♦J, return to hand with the ♣A, and draw trump (discarding a club from dummy), producing this position:

♠ -	♥ K J 9 7	♦ -	♣ Q				
♠ -	♥ 10 8 6 4	♦ -	♣ J	♠ 10 7	♥ -	♦ -	♣ K 8 5
	♠ Q	♥ 5	♦ Q	♣ 10 6			

Pressure can be applied by cashing the side suit winners, West discarding a heart and the ♣J, while dummy comes down to three hearts. The heart finesse, while not certain, makes the contract.

On my line, without ruffing a spade, I would still be in the game after unblocking the ♥Q, because the ♣A is still in hand as an entry in the double threat suit, for a double squeeze:

♠ -	♥ K J 9 7	♦ -	♣ Q 9 2				
♠ -	♥ 10 8 6 4	♦ -	♣ J 7 4	♠ 10 7 6	♥ -	♦ -	♣ K 8 5 3
	♠ Q9	♥ 5	♦ Q	♣ A 10 6			

With five top tricks available, an immediate finesse of the ♥9 would still be one trick short. Cash the two side winners first: West must discard two clubs, lest the heart finesse produce two extra tricks; dummy discards the ♣Q2. With five tricks remaining, finesse the ♥9 and cash the two top hearts. East must discard from ♠10 ♣K8 in front of ♠9 ♣A10, with West already squeezed out of his club help.

- Pete Matthews